

# Record Shows Shield Assisted "Slacker"

## Facts In Case Cannot Be Contradicted.

SPRINGFIELD, Tenn., July 22.—That John K. Shields prostituted his influence as a United States Senator to bring about the setting aside of the selective service act in the case of John Vernon Verhine, a registrant of Union City and the son of a wealthy and influential resident of that place, is convincingly shown by the official correspondence bearing on the case and read by Governor Tom C. Rye in his speech here today. The Governor spoke as follows:

In former speeches I have charged Senator Shields with having interfered with the orderly processes of the selective draft law. For the enforcement of this law in Tennessee, the United States Government has devolved upon me as Governor a large measure of responsibility for its execution is devolved upon a chief executive officer. Major Rutledge Smith, and upon division and local boards.

The officials were selected because of their known probity of character, and their duties have been performed under the sanction of oaths taken before they entered upon the performance of their official functions and duties. Whether Senator John K. Shields tried to prevent J. V. Verhine, of Union City, from responding to his call to military service the records made up by sworn officials, will speak truthfully.

The local board for the county of Obion on April 1, 1918, wrote a letter, which is a part of the record of the Verhine, as follows:

"Union City, April 1, 1918.  
"In re J. V. Verhine.

"Major Rutledge T. Smith, Nashville, Tenn.: Dear Sir:—We are enclosing to you all of our papers in the case of the above named registrant of this county in order that they be sent, if you deem it necessary, to the Provost-Marshal General, together with whatever recommendation you desire to make, in order that this registrant may not be taken from this board and placed in the Emergency Fleet Corporation by Senator Shields.

"The record clearly shows that political influence is being brought to bear, and that an effort at a very late hour was made, and is about to succeed, to keep this registrant from taking the usual course required of other registrants.

"The facts in this case are as follows: When it became known that this board was to send ten men to Camp Gordon, beginning March 29, 1918, this registrant came to the office of the local board, looked over the records himself, and found out that he was the tenth man, and that, as a consequence, he would necessarily be sent to camp, the list of the ten men was published in the weekly papers of the town of Union City, Tenn., and his name was among the number included. When he discovered that he would necessarily have to go, he immediately got busy, taking the matter up with the Governor, whom he recognized then as the head of the draft proceedings in this state; he requested the Governor on account of the large business in which he was engaged at this particular time, and in order that the sacrifice might not be so great on him, to use his power to give him a deferment in call until April 10 or April 15. He was advised by the Governor, that it was only in cases where men were seriously and actively engaged in the production and cultivation of crops, and that at the discretion of the local boards. He thereupon got busy by telegraph with Senator Shields, asking his influence in aiding him to get in the University of Pitts-

burg whereby he might take a course in the Ordinance Department; the wires were touched and he was advised by Senator Shields that it would be impossible to get him into the University of Pittsburgh for the reason that applications had closed; at the time, he was advised by Senator Shields to immediately come to Washington, whereupon on March 23, 1918, he left this city, reaching Washington on Monday March 25. We were advised on that day by his father, J. P. Verhine, that he was employed by the Emergency Fleet Corporation, and his father produced a telegram from him stating that fact.

"On the evening of March 25, 1918, we received from your office instructor to notify the ten registrants of this county to report for military duty on April 1, 1918. As required by law, Mr. Verhine, one of the ten, notice was sent to him at his last known address on Tuesday, March 26. On the 28th day of March, after the notice for this man's enlistment had been sent him on the 26th, the writer received a telegram from Major Bloomfield, of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, stating that J. F. Verhine had been employed in the Emergency Fleet Corporation, and requesting a deferment of the said Verhine's call, the telegram inclosed herewith will indicate to you what action was taken on this request. We have also a ruling from your department citing a Chattanooga case, and one on which General Crowder himself had ruled.

"So following your suggestions and your orders, we have ordered this man to report for military duty this day. His father, with the assistance of Judge W. H. Swiggart, is now in communication with Senator Shields of Washington trying to get our ruling in this matter overridden in this particular case, because of this particular man.

"We also inclose you telegram to bear out the statements above made, and we also inclose Senator Shields' reply to the telegram of Judge Swiggart, upon which this man is insisting for deferment.

"I have as nearly as possible, given you the history of this case, and on account of the fact that this board does not recognize that this man is not in the military service, the contention of this board is that the registrant should report to Camp Gordon, and as a consequence of his failure to report for mobilization, as required by law, we should report him to the Adjutant General of this state as a delinquent.

"We desire to remind you that special and particular favors obtained through political influence by them who are able to command such influence does not redound to the interest of the country, because every other drafted man feels that he has been discriminated against. This particular case is attracting extraordinary attention because of the wealth of this man's father.

"We are trying to do our duty by all these men with absolute impartiality.

"We trust that you will take this matter up with General Crowder at once and see that this man does not obtain anything more than the same square

deal to which they are all entitled.

Yours truly,

"C. N. Lannom, Appeal Agent.

"C. W. Mills, Jr., Secretary.

"P. S.—We have as yet received no formal information or request from the Emergency Fleet Corporation except the telegram indicated and enclosed in the record."

The telegram referred to in the letter as having been exchanged between Attorney W. H. Swiggart and Senator John K. Shields are as follows:

"March 29, 1918.

"Senator John K. Shields, Washington, D. C.: John V. Verhine, employed by the Emergency Fleet Corporation on 25th, local board mailed him notice on the 26th to appear on April 1 for military duty, which notice he has not received yet. Emergency Fleet Corporation requested release of Verhine on the 28th by wire; formal request by mail will be received tomorrow probably. Major Rutledge Smith rules that unless request is received by local board before notice mailed to Verhine, it should be ignored. This is not right. Will you get General Crowder to rule otherwise and order Verhine released under Section 150 S. S. Regulations. Answer.

W. H. Swiggart.

"Received at N. 37 F. S.-87 Govt St., Washington, D. C. 6:18 p. m., March 30, 1918.

"Judge W. H. Swiggart, Union City, Tenn.: Telegram received. The records of Emergency Fleet Corporation show that J. Vernon Verhine entered their service, March 15. Said corporation asked for a deferred classification for Verhine March 28. Provost Marshall General rules that appeal should be granted to the district board under Section 139 of the selective service regulations. His appeal granted by the Government appeal agent stays action by local board. He will be placed in class 3, necessary Government employees.

"John K. Shields.

"706 P. M. Phoned Judge Swiggart 7:10 P. M.

It will be observed that Senator Shields received a telegram from Attorney W. H. Swiggart on March 29, three days before the time Verhine was to entrain for camp. He knew he was called into military service, because Judge Swiggart told him so in the telegram, and Verhine had also stated in a letter to the Senator March 15, and in a telegram to his secretary on March 18.

With full knowledge of the facts, Senator John K. Shields replied to Judge W. H. Swiggart. "He will be placed in Class 3, necessary government employees." To shed further light upon the action of the Senator in this case, as disclosed by the record and the facts as they were understood by those who handled and were familiar with the case, I read you from the record a letter of C. N. Lannom, the appeal agent of the government, as follows:

"Union City, April 15, 1918.

"In re J. V. Verhine, serial No. 2200.

"Major Rutledge T. Smith, Nashville, Tenn.: Dear Sir:—This board today wrote to C. A. Bryant, Jr., of Washington, D. C., the enclosed letter, which states the facts of this registrant's case.

"We repeat that this man is still delinquent; that this board has never yet received the certificate required by the regulations that would authorize the deferring of the mobilization or induction into the military service of this registrant, on account of his being employed in the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

"This registrant, through the efforts of Senator John K. Shields, procured this position for the purpose of avoiding the draft. This matter has gained considerable notoriety here; the friends and relatives of the boys

who have gone to the army, as well as the friends and relatives of those yet to go, feel that this man ought to be made to toe the mark.

"This man, because of his father's wealth and standing in the community, is able to enlist in his behalf the powerful influence of Senator Shields. These other, not so happily situated, do not take to it kindly that this man is avoiding the service to his country in this way.

"Please take such steps as may be necessary to corral this man into the army, or direct us what steps to take. His conduct is wilful and malicious, and there is no end to the injustice that the country will suffer if this sort of thing is to be put over successfully.

"I am writing this letter at the suggestion of the local board, and the sentiments and feeling expressed herein is that of the entire board.

"Very truly yours,

"C. O. Lannom,

"CNL-RF." "Appeal Agent."

Now, as to whether he was actually or technically a deserter I submit the following order:

Local board for the County of Obion, State of Tennessee Union City, Tenn.

Names of Delinquents Reported to Local Police Authority, See Section 130 of Regulations.

"To J. M. Hickman, Sheriff—

There is hereby certified the following list of the names and address of a person who has been duly and legally inducted into the military service of the United States and ordered to report to this local board for military duty and who has failed to report for military duty.

"Under authority of section 6 of the acts of May 18, 1917, and by section 140 of selective service regulations you are required immediately to visit in person or through deputies each whose name appears on this list to locate such persons if possible and bring them before this local board. If you are unable to produce each person within forty-eight hours of the date hereof, exclusive of Sundays and legal holidays, you shall report to this local board all information you may have obtained concerning such delinquent registrants.

"Further information and description concerning this person is available in the records of this local board.

"Order No. 194. Name—John Vernon Verhine. Address—Union City, Tenn.

"C. W. MILES, Jr.

"April 3, 1918.

"The following is a copy of the return on the back of warrant:

"This notice, etc., came to hand and I am informed that the defendant, John Vernon Verhine, is in Washington, this April 5, 1918.

"S. S. WILEY, D. S.

"Union City, Tenn.,

April 26, 1918.

"In re—John Vernon Verhine,

"Major Rutledge Smith, Nashville, Tenn.

"Dear: In reply to your letter of the 23rd inst., in reference to the above named registrant, we are happy to say that John Vernon Verhine reported at Camp Gordon, Ga., on Sunday, April 21.

Classified As Deserter.

"This man was reported to the adjutant-general of the army as a deserter on April 5, 1918, but he was never taken into custody by the police officials in Washington.

"He is in the army now, and we trust will stay there for a little while. Yours truly, C. W. MILES, Jr.

Morgan-Verhine Co.

"Union City, Tenn., March 15, 1918.

"Hon. Tom C. Rye, Governor of Tennessee, State Capitol, Nashville:—Dear Governor: Knowing that you are the head of the army draft department of the state, want to know if in special instances you would be slightly flexible with your rules? "I am out of luck on this 'fill-

in' draft called scheduled for March 29th, it appears that this county will have to furnish ten men in this go-between call, so I have been informed, and I am, excluding the farmers and negroes, the tenth from the start.

"I have been reading press reports for past several weeks, and indications from them said second draft would be called from April to June, and had not arranged my business to leave until April 15.

"I am very actively associated with my father in the conduct of this store, and very successful all along, and right now reaching the height of our busy season previous to Easter, and my assistant ill, and the party to take my place not broken in, and many details of the business for me to look after, which I could do, if my call was delayed to April 10 or 15 or any time the regular second call came.

"I am also exalted ruler of B. P. O. E. Elks and my term expires first Monday night in April and would like to induct my successor into office officially as is customary, also wish to take a degree in Masonry first week in April.

"Could you recommend the local board to skip my number temporarily, or just sent me so I will be leading the first regular second draft call?

"If you can so favor me, would be exceedingly grateful.

To Be Kept Secret.

"If you recommend this extension, will not mention it to any one, as it is no one's business but mine.

"With all good wishes, most respectfully, J. V. VERHINE, age 31."

Appeal Addressed to Smith.

Morgan-Verhine Co.

Union City, Tenn.

March 19, 1918.

"Colonel Rutledge Smith, Chairman of National Defense Board Nashville, Tenn.: Dear Sir—I have previously addressed a letter to the Governor in regard to my request, and thought probably he might be ill or out of the city, so appeal to you:

"Am completely out of luck in this 'fill-in' draft call of March 29, as this county calls for ten men, and I am the tenth one in order number, excluding the farmers and negroes, as I believe the situation stands.

"If it were within your power to grant a favor of allowing me to miss this 'fill-in' draft and go with the second draft in April, would be unexpressably grateful to you, and explain the reason why I desire ten days or two weeks additional time at home.

"Am 31 years old, and have been continuously engaged in operation of department store for past thirteen years, with my father and brother, having full charge of all the details and office management. My book-keeper has been ill for a week, and right here at the climax of an extraordinarily busy season, and Easter the crest of rush and crush upon us, and the person to take my place not broken in, in all this jam, I am urgently needed until I can straighten things out a little. This might be worth \$500 or \$1,000 to me, and would not be cheating the Government out of much time, and sure would make me everlastingly grateful to you and the Government.

"Also am Exalted Ruler, of B. P. O. Elks, and my term expires first week in April, and, as customary, would like to induct my successor into office, and further the first week in April am anticipating taking a degree in Masonic lodge.

"Am a non-commissioned officer in the National Guard, also, and on publicity committee of the third Liberty Loan.

"It seems I am out of luck, just to draw up and include me the last one of the ten wanted, when they might skip and take eleventh man, who hasn't so much to attend to before depart-

ing, and make it lots easier on me.

"Is there any chance for a favor of this kind being granted? Also, say am 68 inches in height, weigh 122 and frame not very rugged.

"If you can consistently favor me, wire me at my expense, or I can get up a petition substantiating my statements. "With abundant thanks ahead in anticipation of any favor shown.

"Very sincerely, J. V. Verhine.

"Also my only brother has been in service in France since last September."

Shields' Conduct Called.

That Verhine was attempting to evade the orders of the board having jurisdiction of him as a registrant is clearly apparent from this record, whether you call it by the name of slacker or not. And it is also clear that, with full knowledge of the board's action, Senator Shields exercised all his power as a United States Senator to aid this young man in his effort to disobey the orders of the board clothed with the authority to fix his status. Notwithstanding he was advised by Verhine's attorney that he had been selected and notice issued or mailed to him, or to his home address but not delivered because Verhine's absence in Washington, the Senator, in advance of a decision of the appeal board as a ruling on the facts by Provost Marshal General Crowder, relying upon his position and power as a United States Senator, seemingly forgetful of the fact that he was not the "Chief Justice" in this case, boldly announces the decision that "Verhine will be placed in Class 3, superseding the local and district boards, and the Provost Marshal-General, as his friends claim he has superseded the Attorney-General of the United States as the President's legal adviser.

The local officials, whose statements concerning the case, are contained in the letters I have read giving the history of the case, as it was made, and as it was understood by them, are reputable citizens and were acting under oath and trying to do honest service and equal justice between the Government and its citizens. They felt as their letters show, very keenly the injustice inflicted upon them and upon the whole people by Senator Shields for one whose wealth and power placed him in position to receive the benefits of his imperial favor.

There is no controversy between Judge Swiggart and myself in regard to the Verhine case, nor does Judge Swiggart undertake to controvert the facts as stated by me. Stahlman's Banner to the contrary notwithstanding. He simply quotes that part of the record which came under his observation. He does not know all the facts disclosed by the records. He is a man for whom I entertain the highest regard, and I believe he knows I would not intentionally misquote him or misstate a fact for political or other advantages nor do I propose to enter into a controversy with Mrs. Welch, the sister of the young man, who naturally would desire to defend her brother. She simply undertakes to state what she knows of the record. The statement I made is based upon the entire record, all of which is in my possession and is public property.

## Sugar Rules.

Merchants are not allowed but 1 cent profit per pound on sugar.

Merchants can buy sugar only upon certificates issued by the State Federal Food Administration at Nashville.

Legal preserving pledges properly sworn to may be accepted from customers, up to 25 pounds. This cannot be used for table purposes.

All persons who serve food at any place, except in the home must not serve more than 1 1/2 teaspoonful per person for fruit or cereal, and 1 1/4 half teaspoonful for beverage. No sugar bowls allowed.

Merchants are not allowed to sell more than 2 pounds at one time to a town customer and 5 pounds to a country customer, and in no case more than 3 pounds per person per month for household use.

B. L. Quarles, County Food Administrator.